

Contributions

CHRISTIANITY THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Text: For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Matt. 10: 20.

When we look out upon the world and see what the ingenuity of man, under the generous influence of civilization, has accomplished—the great chasm between the flail and the thresher, the sickle and the binder, the pen and the printing press, the pack horse and the locomotive, and many others, we stop in wonderment. Why this great advancement, whence the source from which could be drawn this skill and knowledge to advance the welfare of mankind. While studying this question we are very strikingly met with this fact that for the first forty or fifty centuries but little advancement or improvement was made in behalf of the welfare and comfort of the human family.

Then why all this change in the last ten or twenty centuries? To the skeptic and atheist all is darkness, but to the Christian it is very plain and easily understood. Nearly twenty centuries ago a new power was brought upon the earth, or rather an old power in a different form. Christ, the Savior of mankind, was born into the world that whosoever believeth on him might have life eternal. A power which if permitted to work in and thru you and me, will accomplish as great a change in our life as the world has become improved.

And this is what I wish to impress upon our minds this morning, that it is not man that is accomplishing this great work, but the spirit of God, for it is not ye that speak but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Let us call up a few noted characters who have had a deeper insight and a nearer relationship with God than we have had, tho not impossible, and see and hear what they testify. First of all we will call up that great scholar, soldier, and God-fearing man, Moses, the Christ of the Old Testament. How plain and prominent is the story of his life to all Bible readers? How that he was rescued from the river, how God appeared to him in the burning bush, and here is where we wish him to testify. God told him to go over into Egypt before Pharaoh and ask permission that the Israelites might depart out of the land to return to their God-given inheritance. Moses, like we, felt his weakness and told the Lord "that he was slow of speech and of a slow tongue." That is, he would not have the eloquence and power to persuade Pharaoh to give up a people that was uncalculably increasing the wealth of his nation daily. But listen and hear what God says, Ex. 4: 12, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." With this emphatic declaration, Moses, like many of us, still hesitated and asked God to send some one with him. God became angered at him, but

promised to send Aaron with him but held Moses to His first command, that he would have to give God's word to Aaron to speak; being to him instead of a mouth and Moses to Aaron instead of a God.

In Is. 50: 4, we read, "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, etc."

In Jer. 1: 7, "Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, behold I have put my words in thy mouth."

Thus we might bring up many more and they would tell us conclusively that they have only been instruments in the hands of God to carry out His wonderful destiny of man. And now, my brother, sister and friend, may it be, or is it a fact, that God has a work for each of us as an instrument in his hand to accomplish. And I pray God the Father may send his spirit this moment to each of us and impress the fact, that it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Go with me and let us study the mechanism and complications of that huge machine, the locomotive. How it stands before us, massive yet symmetrical, complicated yet easily controlled. And what is the most striking feature of it all stands before us a huge mass of iron, steel and wood, and has no power of itself: put water into the boiler, fuel in the firebox, an operator at the throttle and you have a machine that brings gladness and comfort to every land. The operator has control to go forward or backward at will by merely drawing one lever. Man is a greater complicated mechanism than the most intricately designed machine springing from the genius of man. He is the highest creation from God's own hand. He stands before us as the engine without fuel and water. Whence the power to move and to do? We realize there are two sources of power or influence, good and evil. Man's will is the lever which admits the power of good that he may go forward and upward and do the will of Him who said, "It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Or it will admit the power of evil which carries us down the steep incline away from God to eternal misery and torment. Christian friends, this morning which way have we the lever turned? Have we given up self and all that we may be instruments in God's hands that thereby his work shall be carried forward to greater accomplishments. How natural it is for us to shrink from duty? How we are almost led to detest the idea of speaking a word for Christ in public; a prayer or testimony, and do you know my brother, sister, that by so doing you set the words of Christ at naught when he said, "for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." It has been my experience that when I had the greatest confidence in myself I could do the least and when I realized or felt as tho I could do nothing, but by giving or resigning all to God he led me out victorious. Then

let us resign ourselves to Him who is able to keep us. Then if we be called upon to speak a word or to lead in prayer, speak that which He shall give thee, if it be only his model prayer. It would be a very hard matter to get twelve of our number to start out to preach Christ as Christ sent the twelve apostles. Now we would want to provide extra clothing, and much money in our purses that we might be independent. And above all I presume we would want to have time to study God's word that we might declare it. I would not argue that it is not necessary to make those preparations in our day and age.

Peter preached as powerful sermons as Paul, yet it required an educated Paul to carry the divine message into refined Europe. Man must do what he can and God completes that which is lacking.

What thoughts must have run thru the minds of the twelve. They had constantly been with Christ since called and now they were to go away from him and do duty for him. Do you think some of the doubts we may entertain they entertained? Let that be as it will, but when they returned and related their experiences—how they were instruments in performing miracles and how they were able to withstand the arguments of those who assailed them. Do you think their faith was strengthened by going and trusting. They had fully realized that it is not ye that speak but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Then there is the other side of the question. We are so apt to assail and criticise that which others are doing and saying. Had we the fact delibly written in our mind that the person is doing only that which the Holy Spirit gives or permits if for good, how different our actions might be. We must be wise as serpents, allow the Spirit to direct and if the work proves to be of satan we should assail with all the power God has given.

Gamaliel recognized this great truth when Peter and John were brought before that learned body, the Jewish Sanhedrin. They had been brought to answer why they refused to obey the demands of this august body, not to preach Christ and him crucified, desiring rather to obey God than man. Their determination had worked and angered the Sanhedrin, that it was about to issue a decree to slay the apostles.

Gamaliel rose up in this confusion and warned them of what they were about to do. Stating that other men had caused uprisings and that they and their followers had come to naught. And now if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Let us, too, be careful what we say of others and their works, lest we be found with the lever reversed and the power of satan carrying us away from God. If there be any here this morning that have not put themselves in a relationship with Christ, that his Holy Spirit may work thru them, I pray the Father to cause you to draw the brakes, allow God's power to come into your heart